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Forty-ninth session
Items 44, 45, 49, 52, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 99 and 101 of the preliminary list*
RESTRUCTURING AND REVITALIZATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS IN THE ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND RELATED FIELDS
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Letter dated 27 June 1994 from the Permanent Representative of Algeria to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have the honour to transmit herewith the Ministerial Statement on an agenda for development adopted by the Group of 77 on 24 June 1994, on the occasion of the commemoration of the thirtieth anniversary of the Group of 77, held at United Nations Headquarters in New York on 24 June 1994 (see annex).

On behalf of the Group of 77, I would highly appreciate it if you would arrange for the present letter and its annex to be circulated as an official document of the General Assembly, under items 44, 45, 49, 52, 91, 92, 93, 94, 96, 99 and 101 of the preliminary list, and of the substantive session of the Economic and Social Council of 1994, under agenda items 2, 3, 4, 5 (a), (e), (f) and (i), 6, 7 and 9.

(Signed) Ramtane LAMAMRA
Ambassador and
Permanent Representative
of Algeria to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77
New York

ANNEX

Ministerial Statement on an agenda for development, adopted by the Group of 77 on 24 June 1994

1. The initiative for an agenda for development is a timely endeavour. It provides the opportunity to embark on a process of constructive dialogue and political mobilization with a view to creating a true and equitable partnership on development issues, which the Group of 77 considers of crucial importance, particularly in response to shifts of emphasis and priority away from development within the United Nations. There is a need to adhere to the priorities of the United Nations system in favour of development initiatives and needs.

2. The Group of 77 is committed to multilateralism. The United Nations, because of its universal character and democratic principles, has a crucial role to play in international cooperation and the promotion of economic growth and development. This should be at the heart of an agenda for development.

3. An agenda for development should have a clear substantive content and specific action. It should, in particular, seek to promote effective implementation of the existing commitments and agreements in the area of international economic and social development. It should seek to reverse the prevailing fragmented approach to development. It should take into account the priorities of the developing countries and the need to ensure a supportive external environment. It should recognize that economic growth and development in the developing countries are of mutual interest to developing and developed countries for the strengthening of the global economy. Indeed, growth in developing and developed countries have a positive mutual correlation. Also, the inherent mutuality of benefit and common concern would mean that developed countries would need the cooperation of developing countries to deal with transborder issues of common interest. An agenda for development should be based on the fundamental right to development and the recognition that development is also an indispensable prerequisite for peace.

4. The gap between developed and developing countries continues to widen. It reflects the marginalization of developing countries in the control over the main determinants of international trade, money, finance, technology, information and communication flows. An effective partnership between developed and developing countries should address these fundamental imbalances. This requires, on the part of developed countries, a new attitude and greater responsiveness to the needs of the developing countries.

5. Economic growth is the mainspring of development. An acceleration of the rate of economic growth is essential for expanding the resource base of developing countries and hence for economic, technical and social transformation. It generates the required financial, physical, human and technological resources which are the pillars of development.

6. External factors are an indispensable complement in the strengthening of the steps taken in the internal sphere. The external imperatives of economic

growth are many and can be critical in determining success or failure of domestic efforts of developing countries. However, the debate on international cooperation for development should not dictate prescriptions on macroeconomic policy-making for developing countries and on areas exclusive to domestic policies. Development must take into account country specificities as is evident from the varied examples of economic success stories and failures.

7. Essentially, development is about the improvement of the quality of life, eradication of hunger, disease and illiteracy and securing employment for all. Its primary objective must be to eradicate poverty and satisfy the basic needs of all people, including nutrition, health and housing. Education and training, which play a critical role in the development of human resources, should be pursued in such a way that everyone is given an equal opportunity to participate actively and productively in the development process. The improvement of the role and status of women is also essential to development. It is recognized that development is essentially a dynamic process, that it is and should be people-centred. In this connection, the negative effects of structural adjustment policies that divert resources away from social priorities, including health and education, should be firmly addressed. An agenda for development must fully address itself to these challenges and should also propose practical initiatives for the eradication of poverty in the formulation and implementation of structural adjustment programmes.

8. An agenda for development should clearly specify the role of the United Nations. It should also analyse the relationship of the United Nations with the specialized agencies and the Bretton Woods institutions, which are an integral part of the United Nations system, and clearly identify the division of labour with regard to policies and activities, to enhance effective action in the economic, social and related fields within the United Nations system and the regional commissions, taking into account the need for effective coordination among them.

9. An agenda for development should also focus on action-oriented recommendations to deal with the critical economic situation of Africa, which requires a greater degree of commitment and implementation of concrete measures, and take into account the specific needs and requirements of the least developed countries. It should also address the specific constraints of land-locked developing countries and small island developing States.

10. Other critical areas of action on which an agenda for development should focus are, inter alia:

Trade liberalization

11. An agenda for development should forge an international consensus on the mutual benefits of global trade liberalization as an effective means of international cooperation for development and to give impetus to renewed efforts already undertaken over the last decade to build upon the advocacy of trade liberalization and avoidance of protectionist policies. There should, above all, be consistency and coherence between proclaimed adherence to trade liberalization and implementation of specific trade policies.

12. The recent conclusion of the Uruguay Round of multilateral trade negotiations dispelled the possibilities of fragmentation of the international trading system. Our expectation is that the new agreements will bring about a halt and ultimate abolition of unfair trade practices in keeping with multilateral trade agreements, including trade restrictions on products of the developing countries. The transition from the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade to the World Trade Organization should take place smoothly. The dispute settlement mechanism of the World Trade Organization should prevent and/or redress unilateral actions of a protectionist nature. The continued attempts to introduce social and environmental clauses in the international trade regime would have a negative impact on economic growth and development in developing countries; on the one hand, they represent protectionism in disguise, and, on the other, they would transfer an unbearable social burden to developing countries. There should be a built-in mechanism to provide adequate compensation to those developing countries adversely affected by the new multilateral trade regime.

Financial flows

13. An agenda for development should focus on a wide range of issues that directly or indirectly affect not only the flows of foreign direct investment but also other forms of investment, loans and official development assistance. The international community faces a crisis of official development assistance characterized by a stagnation, and even reduction, in aid budgets, a trend that is contrary to the agreed target of 0.7 per cent of GNP. Even specific commitments undertaken, such as those at Rio, have not been forthcoming. The agenda for development should seek to forge a new international consensus on the question of financial flows, taking into consideration the effectiveness of and increase in the volume of resources for official development assistance and the promotion of international compliance with internationally agreed commitments for new and additional resources for development cooperation. The creation of a sound environment for international financial flows should be shared goals of the international community.

14. The debt burden remains a major constraint on development efforts of many developing countries, including the least developed countries, which continue to experience severe debt service difficulties. More debt relief should be provided, including cancellation of debts, debt reduction and, more generally, innovative schemes. An effective international debt strategy is yet to be devised and implemented.

15. More specifically, what is required is the adoption of policies that would ensure (a) adequate flow of concessional financing to developing countries, particularly low-income countries; (b) stimulation of other capital flows, including foreign direct investment; (c) effective reduction of the debt burden of developing countries and reversal of net negative flow of resources; (d) creation of special drawing rights and allocation for development.

The role of science and technology in development

16. An agenda for development must consider the fundamental role played by science and technology in economic development. The agenda should identify ways

and means: (a) to enhance the mechanisms within the United Nations to address science and technology issues; (b) to include the consideration of the respective roles of the State and the private sector in promoting scientific development as a basis for technological development; (c) to improve the transfer of technology, including environmentally sound technologies, on preferential and concessional terms; (d) to promote long-term technological cooperation and partnership between holders of technologies and potential users; (e) to improve the endogenous capacities of developing countries to develop, assess, encourage and utilize such technologies through, inter alia, research and development, education and training; (f) to enhance access of small and medium-sized enterprises to technology; and (g) to facilitate for developing countries effective access to and transfer of technology that is publicly owned or under public domain.

Economic and technical cooperation among developing countries

17. An agenda for development should seek to secure adequate support from the developed countries and from the United Nations system for activities and programmes on economic cooperation among developing countries and technical cooperation among developing countries.

Regional economic integration

18. An agenda for development should address the importance of regional economic integration. Regional integration should be regarded as complementary to multilateralism. The concept of "open regional integration" would strengthen reciprocal ties between growing economic interdependence at the regional level and the building up of a more open and transparent international economy. The process towards regional integration must ensure that it does not lead to new protectionist barriers or exclusionary trade policies.

19. The above elements constitute an initial contribution by the Group of 77 to an agenda for development, which will be submitted to the Economic and Social Council. They are meant to serve as guidelines for the Secretary-General, who should be encouraged to present, on the basis of the mandate contained in General Assembly resolution 48/166 of 21 December 1993, a revised report on an agenda for development, which should contain action-oriented recommendations and concrete proposals for consideration by the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

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(Signed) Ramtane LAMAMRA
Ambassador
Permanent Representative of
Algeria to the United Nations
Chairman of the Group of 77
New York

ANNEX

Ministerial Declaration adopted on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the Group of 77

We, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of the States members of the Group of 77, meeting in New York on 24 June 1994 on the occasion of the thirtieth anniversary of the founding of the Group of 77,

Extending on this auspicious occasion a warm welcome to the Republic of South Africa as the newest member of the Group of 77, and looking forward to important contributions that a united, democratic and non-racial South Africa will make towards the achievement of our common goals,

Having reviewed the progress achieved by the Group of 77 and the difficulties it has encountered in the past thirty years, assessed the transformations taking place in the world economy and international economic relations and analysed the implications, as well as opportunities and challenges, that these changes hold for developing countries,

Strongly reaffirming the provisions contained in the Joint Declaration adopted on 15 June 1964 by the Seventy-seven developing countries, on the occasion of the first session of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), as well as the Charter of Algiers adopted at the First Ministerial Meeting of the Group of 77 on 25 October 1967, solemnly declare the following:

1. The founding of the Group of 77, thirty years ago, was the result of the collective perception by the developing countries that their problems are shared and common, and of the need for joint action in accordance with the principles and objectives of the Charter of the United Nations, in the face of the inequitable pattern of international economic relations. The evolution of the Group of 77 is intimately linked with the United Nations system and a clear manifestation of the importance it attaches to multilateral cooperation.

2. In these thirty years the Group of 77 has become not only a major actor in international economic relations, but also a prime initiator of ideas, concepts and initiatives relating to development and international cooperation.

3. The expectations for greater global security and a just, equitable and non-discriminatory international economic order have not been realized. The world today is beset by acute economic and social problems, many of them structural in nature, requiring urgent redress by the international community. We regret that the interdependent world economy continues to be marked by uncertainty, imbalances and recession, as well as the continuing overall marginalization of developing countries. We also note with concern the tendency on the part of developed countries to take decisions that affect the world economy outside the multilateral framework of the United Nations system, without giving full consideration to the interests of developing countries. The need to democratize international relations is more pressing than ever.

4. Over the past three decades, insufficient financial flows, official development assistance (ODA) levels remaining well below the 0.7 per cent of gross national product (GNP) targets, lack of foreign investment, inequities of the international trading system, depressed commodity prices and the debt crisis have attained serious political and economic dimensions and have emerged as the main obstacles to growth and development in the developing countries. Closely interlinked with these problems has been the aggravation of widespread poverty, made even more onerous by structural adjustment programmes. Most developing nations are engaged in courageous policies to restructure their economies, despite an unfavourable external environment. We therefore call for intensification of efforts by the international community to address these issues and take concrete measures to help solve them.

5. We express the hope that the commitments assumed through the conclusion of the Uruguay Round in Marrakesh, Morocco, on 15 April 1994, although not reflecting the totality of the aspirations of developing countries, will help constitute an open, stable, predictable, equitable and transparent multilateral trading system. In this context, we reiterate the need to abolish unilateral and arbitrary commercial practices and measures, noting with concern the persistence of certain trends aimed at developing and encouraging new forms of protectionism and distortions, in particular the attempt to introduce social and environmental clauses to the international trade regime. We also stress the need for steps to be taken to provide adequate compensation to those developing countries adversely affected by the new multilateral trade regime.

6. We reiterate our profound concern at the persistent critical economic situation in Africa and the deteriorating economic conditions in the least developed countries, particularly in view of inadequate international support.

7. We call for full and effective participation of the developing countries in the process of decision-making and in the resolution of world economic problems through strengthening multilateralism and implementing an effective mechanism of multilateral macroeconomic policy coordination on a global basis aimed at promoting equitable growth in the world economy. We strongly believe that sustained economic growth and development, particularly of developing countries, constitute the main objective which must be pursued as a priority by the international community.

8. We attach high priority to the revitalization and strengthening of the role of the United Nations in promoting international cooperation for economic and social development. We strongly believe that the United Nations should be encouraged to develop its full potential in the area of international economic cooperation and should be endowed with the requisite resources to contribute to solving the serious economic and social problems facing the developing countries in their efforts to achieve sustained economic growth and development. In this regard, we also emphasize the need to reinforce even further the importance and relevance of UNCTAD and to revitalize its activities and functions in the field of international cooperation conducive to development.

9. We call for the full implementation of the commitments to international cooperation as contained in General Assembly resolutions, especially the Declaration on International Economic Cooperation, in particular

the Revitalization of Economic Growth and Development of the Developing Countries, adopted at the eighteenth special session of the General Assembly, the International Development Strategy for the Fourth United Nations Development Decade, the Declaration on the Right to Development, the United Nations New Agenda for the Development of Africa in the 1990s, the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the 1990s, the Cartagena Commitment adopted by UNCTAD VIII, the Rio Declaration on Environment and Development and Agenda 21 adopted by the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development (UNCED), and other UNCED-related agreements and follow-up conferences. We welcome the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea which enters into force on 16 November 1994 and hope that the forthcoming adoption of the resolution relating to the implementation of Part XI of the Convention during the resumed session of the forty-eighth General Assembly will ensure early realization of the universal participation in the Convention.

10. We attach the highest priority to the initiative for an Agenda for Development as an instrument to promote an action-oriented consensus for economic growth and development. We reaffirm the critical need for an integrated approach to development as well as for coordinated and effective international cooperation. Moreover, we stress that it is the responsibility of each country to define its national goals, objectives and priorities in its development process, and therefore, actions aimed at introducing new conditionalities in redefining the basis of international cooperation should be avoided. The international community should support and supplement the national efforts of developing countries.

11. We reaffirm our strong commitment to strengthen South-South cooperation as an integral part of the strategy of the developing countries to achieve economic growth. We call upon the international community to provide effective support to programmes on economic and technical cooperation among developing countries. A number of initiatives and projects have been launched within the framework of South-South cooperation, the full potential of which remains far from being realized. We reiterate our conviction that South-South cooperation and individual and collective self-reliance of our countries are essential means for enhancing our negotiating power and sustaining our solidarity and cohesion. The Caracas Programme of Action on Economic Cooperation among Developing Countries remains an essential framework for our common efforts and adequate steps should be taken for its implementation. We welcome the momentum gained in recent years and progress achieved by the regional and subregional economic cooperation and integration efforts undertaken by developing countries and we commit ourselves to a reinvigorated effort of South-South cooperation at the interregional level.

12. We express our determination and commitment to bring the action of the Group of 77 to a new level of commitment, to strengthen its institutional effectiveness with a view to consolidating common positions of our Group on all the issues and activities of the United Nations system related to the goals and objectives stated above. To this end:

(a) Each chapter will have a liaison office to be funded by voluntary contributions from its members and other modalities approved by each chapter;

(b) The Chairman of each chapter will serve for one year;

(c) Two meetings of the chapters will be held each year: one at the beginning of the year to establish the priority issues for coordination and a second one to assess the implementation of established objectives for the period. A chapter meeting may be called at the ministerial level, as necessary.

13. We welcome the establishment of the Joint Coordinating Committee between the Group of 77 and the Movement of Non-aligned Countries, which will contribute to enhanced coordination and complementarity between the respective programmes of our Group and the Movement of Non-aligned Countries on South-South and North-South cooperation.

14. In the light of the unsatisfactory state of the global economy, we reaffirm the urgent need for a constructive dialogue between the North and the South as an instrument for the strengthening of international cooperation and the promotion of economic growth and development of developing countries. We wish to stress that such a dialogue should be based on the economic imperative of common interests and benefits, and reflect genuine interdependence.

15. We reaffirm our commitment to continue to contribute to strengthening the role of the United Nations in the promotion of peace and development. Indeed, development is a prerequisite for lasting peace. The realization of the right to development as a basic human right should be given utmost priority.

16. We hope that the forthcoming summits and conferences such as the International Conference on Population and Development, the World Summit for Social Development, the Fourth World Conference on Women and the United Nations Conference on Human Settlements (Habitat II), to which we attach great priority, will contribute to a greater understanding of the development problems of the developing countries and help to evolve a global consensus and mobilize adequate resources to address them effectively.

17. We hereby declare our firm resolve to build upon the above goals and objectives of the Group of 77 for the year 2000 and beyond and reaffirm our determination to pursue our actions towards the achievement of the universal right to development of all nations and peoples. In issuing this declaration on behalf of one hundred thirty developing nations and China, we appeal to the leaders of the G-7 nations meeting in Italy next July to contribute to addressing the above challenges urgently and with boldness.

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